

We received 646 comments from 263 commenters during the March 2013 comment period. All comments were recorded and substantive comments were discussed by the interdisciplinary team. Some comments were outside the scope of this project. Many comments expressed a love of the area or general approval or disapproval of the project. Many commenters suggested similar solutions. The following comments affected the proposed action or alternatives.

1. Provide access for climbing Mt. Garfield, Mt. Arthur, Tenney Crag, Cameron Cone, Tuckaway Mountain, Specimen and Sentinel Rocks.

The proposed action was changed to allow access to the summits of Mt. Garfield, Mt. Arthur, Tenney Crag, Cameron Cone, Specimen, Sentinel Rocks via the Ruxton Creek watershed, north of the Bear Creek watershed. Trail 667, which is currently an access point to the peaks, will be closed to protect the fish. RMFI and Great Outdoors consultants (who specialize in motorized trails) attempted to find a sustainable reroute for trail 667 and were unable to do so. With the exception of the summits the remainder of the Bear Creek watershed will be excluded from travel off trails.

2. Provide access to historic sites (Jones Park, Louds Cabin, Giles Cabin)

Under the Proposed Action and alternatives, there will not be access to historic areas or structures. This is based on the need to protect the fish by removing trails in the area of the structures, not because of a desire to make the structures inaccessible. Both RMFI and Great Outdoors consultants (who specialize in motorized trails) attempted to find a sustainable route for a trail through Jones Park and were unable to do so.

3. Close and rehabilitate or pave High Drive due to sediment

The proposed action was changed and proposes to close the road to recreational vehicular traffic. A detailed engineering road assessment completed by CH2M Hill in 2012 recommends fixing the drainage and sedimentation issues rather than closing or paving.

4. A seasonal closure is not needed due to soil type

The seasonal closure has have been removed from the proposed action and all of the alternatives. While there will not be an annual season closure, emergency closures will be issued if weather conditions cause the trails to become unsafe for public use or to protect resources from damage.

5. Leave trail system as is. Increase maintenance, sediment traps, re-route, bridges, trail stabilization.

The purpose of this project is to protect the greenback cutthroat trout. A report was commissioned by the USFS and CSU to determine the level of improvements and maintenance that would be needed to sustain the trails in the Bear Creek Watershed. The trails assessment,

produced by RMFI in 2012, showed that the level of improvements and maintenance needed to keep sediment produced by the trails from entering Bear Creek was unsustainable. RMFI and Great Outdoors consultants (who specialize in motorized trails) attempted to find a sustainable reroute for trail 667 and were unable to do so.

6. Portions of trails 622 and 720 are in terrible shape and are not sustainable as motorized trails.

The proposed action and alternatives were changed. The proposal is to build a sustainable reroute connecting 622 to 701. Trail designer Troy Scott Parker of NatureShape says in his report that the proposed route is not only sustainable but also “passes through or near a very pleasant high-country creek, meadow, aspen, and ponderosa ecosystem..... providing a nice trail experience.”

7. Close 666 due to sediment

Alternative C was developed to address the concern that Trail 666 contributes sediment to Bear Creek. It will be analyzed as part of the NEPA process.

8. Buckhorn and Palmer Trails are not on the map.

Currently, Buckhorn and Palmer Trail are non-system trails. Non-system trails are not recognized by the US Forest Service. Based on comments received the proposed action was changed to convert Buckhorn Trail and Palmer Trail from non-system trails to National Forest System Trails.